THE ANCIENT

# LAWS,

Customs *and* Orders

OF THE

# MINERS

IN THE

King's Forrest of *Mendipp*

In the County of

*SOMERSET.*

*LONDON*,
Printed for *William Cooper* at the
*Pellican* in *Little Britain*. 1687.

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# *The Laws and Orders of the* Mendipp *Miners.*

BE it known that this is a true Copy of the Inrolled in the King's Exchequer in the time of King *Edward* the Fourth, of a debate that was in the County of *Somerset*, between the Lord *Benfield* and the Tennants of *Chewton*, and the Prior of *Green Oare*: the said Prior complaining unto the King of great Injuries and wrongs that he had upon *Mendipp*, being the King's Forrest, the said King *Edward* commanded the Lord *Chock*, the Lord Chief Justice of *England* to go down into the County of *Somerset* to *Mendipp*, and sit in Concord and Peace in the said County concerning *Mendipp*, upon pain of high displeasure. The said Lord *Chock* sate upon *Mendipp* on a place of my Lords of *Bath*, called the *Forge*: Whereas he commanded all the Commoners to appear, and especially

the four Lords Royals of *Mendipp* ( that is to ſay ) the Biſhop of *Bath*, my Lord of *Glaſton*, my Lord *Benfield* the Lord of *Chewton*, and my Lord of *Richmond*, with all the appearance to the Number of ten thouſand People. A Proclamation was made to enquire of all the Company how they would be ordered, then they with one conſent made anſwer, that they would be ordered and tryed by the four Lords of the Royalties ; And then the four Lords Royals were agreed, that the Comminers of *Mendipp* ſhould turn out their Cattle at their out-lets as much the Summer as they be able to Winter, without hownding or pounding upon whoſe grounds ſoever they went to take their courſe and recourſe. To which the ſaid four Lords Royals did put their Seals, and were alſo agreed, that whoſoever ſhould break the ſaid Bonds ſhould forfeit to the King a thouſand Marks, and all the Comminers their bodys and goods to be at the King's Pleaſure or Command that doth either hound or pound.

The

*The old Ancient Occupation of Miners in and upon* Mendipp, *being the King's Forreſt of* Mendipp *within the County of* Somerſet, *being one of the four Staples of* England, *which have been exerciſed, uſed and continued through the ſaid Forreſt of* Mendipp, *from the time whereof no man living hath not memory, as hereafter doth particularly enſue the Order.*

1. FIrſt, that if any man whatſoever he be, that doth intend to venture his Life to be a Workman in the ſaid Occupation, he muſt firſt of all crave Licence of the Lord of the Soyle where he doth purpoſe to work, and in his abſence of his Officers as the Lead Reave or Bailiff and the Lord, neither his Officers can deny him.

2. *Item*, That after the firſt Licence had, the Workman ſhall never need to

ask leave again but to be at his free will, to pitch within the Forreſt, and to brake the ground where and in what place it ſhall pleaſe him to his behalf and profit, uſing himſelf truſtily & truly.

2. *Item*, If any man that doth begin to pitch or groof ſhall have his Hackes through two ways after the Rake. Note that he that doth throw the Hacke muſt ſtand to the girdle or waſt in the ſame groof, and then no Man ſhall or may work within his Hackes Throwe, provided always that no Man ſhall or can keep but his wet and dry Groof and his Mark.

4. *Item*, That when a Workman have landed his Oar he may carry the ſame to cleanſing or blowing to what Minery it ſhall pleaſe him for the ſpeedy making out of the ſame. So that he doth truly pay the Lord of the Soyle where it was landed his due, which is the tenth part thereof.

5. *Item*, That if any Lord or Officer hath

hath once given Licence to any man to build, or ſet up any Hearth or Waſhing-houſe, to waſh, cleanſe or blow Oar, he that once hath leave ſhall keep it for ever, or give it to whom he will, ſo that he doth juſtly pay his Lott Lead, which is the tenth pound, which ſhall be blown at the Hearth or Hearths, and alſo that he doth keep it tennantable as the Cuſtome doth require.

6. *Item*, That if any man of that Occupation doth pick or ſteal any Ledd or Oare to the value of thirteen pence halfpenny, the Lord or his Officer may arreſt all his Lead works, Houſe and Hearth, with all his Grooſs and Works, and keep them as ſafely to his own uſe, and ſhall take the Perſon that hath ſo offended, and bring him where his Houſe is, or his Work, and all his Tools or Inſtruments to the Occupation belongs as he uſeth, and put him into the ſaid Houſe and ſet fire on all together about him, and baniſh him from that Occupation before the Miners for ever.

7. *Item*, If that Perſon doth pick or ſteal there any more, he ſhall be tryed by the Law, for this Law and Cuſtome hath no more to do with him.

8. *Item*, That every Lord of the Soyle ought to keep two Miner Courts by the year, and to ſwear twelve Men of the ſame Occupation, for the redreſs of Miſdemeanors touching the Mineries.

9. *Item*, That the Lord or Lords may make and grant manner of Arreſts (*viz.*) firſt for ſtriſe between Man and Man, for their Works under the Ground or Earth. Secondly for his own dutys for Lead or Oare, whereſoever he findeth it upon the ſame Forreſt.

10. *Item*, That if any man by means of Misfortune take his death, as by falling of the Earth upon him, by drawing or ſtifeling, or otherwiſe, as in time paſt many have been, the Workmen of the ſame Occupation are bound to fetch him out of the Earth, and to bring him

him to Chriſtian Burial at their own coſts and charges, although he be forty Fathome under the Earth, as heretofore hath been done, and the Coroner or any officer at large ſhall not have to do with him in any reſpect.

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*F I N I S.*

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